



Technical Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 15th, 2025

10:00 – 12:00 CST

[Virtual Meeting Recording](#)

1. Attendees

Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Matt Posner	PPBEP
Chloe Ray	PPBEP
Zach Schang	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Bailey Walkinshaw	PPBEP
Katie Baltzer	TNC AL
Joy Brown	NWFL Sentinel Landscape
Jane Caffrey	UWF
Amanda Croteau	UWF
Kevin Davenport	Black & Veatch
Kate Dawson	Moffat & Nichol
Dillon Draughn	Moffat & Nichol
Mike Fazio	Santa Rosa County
Stephanie Friedman	Retired EPA
Kahreem Golden	TNC FL
Wade Jeffrey	UWF
Jeanette Kelson	WSP
Matt Kelly	Escambia County
Jackie Lane	Friends of Perdido Bay
Al Montaina	Citizen
Sherri Myers	Citizen
Chris Verlinde	Santa Rosa County
Dana Vestal	Escambia County
Christian Wagley	Healthy Gulf
Lisa Waidner	UWF
John Williams	Black & Veatch
Brent Wipf	Escambia County

1. Call to Order

Kate Dawson (Moffatt & Nichol) called the meeting to order at 10:02 on July 15th, 2025.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Kate Dawson (Moffatt & Nichol) asked for new Technical Committee (TC) attendees to introduce themselves. Kahreem Holden (TNC FL), Kevin Davenport (Black & Veatch), and Sherri Myers (Citizen) introduced themselves as new members of the Committee.



3. Approval of March 11th, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Jackie Lane (Friends of Perdido Bay) made a motion to approve the March 11th, 2025, meeting minutes. Chris Verlinde (Santa Rosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Guest Presentation

Jane Caffrey (UWF) – Water quality and microbial source tracking in the Panhandle estuaries

Dr. Jane Caffrey provided an overview of targeted water quality and sediment monitoring, which was funded by a 2023 legislative appropriation to UWF. This project aimed to identify sources of fecal bacteria using microbial source tracking (MST) techniques and examine relationships with nutrient inputs within the watershed, as well as explore sediment geochemistry and contaminant concentrations. The project was conducted across three Estuary Program watersheds, with the presentation focused on the Pensacola and Perdido Bay watersheds. The team collected basic in-situ water quality parameters, grab water samples (e.g., Enterococcus and E. coli, TN, TP, Chlorophyll-*a*), qPCR, and sediment cores and grabs. Next steps include processing and analyzing the MST data. Water quality and sediment data are available upon request, and MST data are anticipated to be available in the fall.

5. Staff Updates

a. 2025 State of the Bays Report

W. Scheffel announced that the State of the Bays report is anticipated to be released in August and shared updates on the new website design. This is the Program's second State of the Bays report, and PPBEP is updating data for existing indicators and adding a new indicator, Fisheries. The 2023 report will be archived and linked on www.stateofthebays.org.

b. Annual Management Conference Meeting debrief

On April 16th, 2025, PPBEP hosted its annual Management Conference at the Sanders Beach–Corinne Jones Resource Center, bringing together over 60 participants from organizations across Florida and Alabama. Chief Dan “Skyhorse” Helms was the keynote speaker and PPBEP staff presented on major Program milestones throughout the year, including NEP designation and the Program’s first Annual Impact report. The conference featured several breakout sessions, all focused-on investing in watershed resilience.

c. Community Grant Program Request for Proposals

W. Scheffel announced that the Community Grant Program is currently open for proposal submittals and will close on July 31st, 2025. The total amount to be awarded this year is \$250,000 with award amounts ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000. The Community Grant Program has been restructured for this cycle, increasing the maximum award funding from \$50,000 to \$75,000 and extending the award period from October 1st, 2025 – December 31st, 2026. Please visit the [website](#) for more information.

d. Strategic Planning

PPBEP staff is working with idgroup to develop a strategic plan for the Program, which includes updating the organizational structure, staff roles and responsibilities, and drafting a comprehensive 5-year plan with prioritized actionable steps to achieve established goals.



e. Funding Announcements

W. Scheffel announced that the National Fish and Wildlife Federation has awarded PPBEP \$10 million for the Oyster Restoration Initiative. This funding will support the continuing design and implementation of the project, which aims to restore 600-hectares of oyster habitat in the Pensacola Bay System over the next ten years.

f. Project and Monitoring Updates

i. Bronson Field/Tarkiln Bayou and Lillian Swamp Restoration Designs

Kate Dawson (Moffat & Nichol) provided an overview of restoration designs for the Bronson Field Restoration project and the Lillian Swamp Restoration project. This presentation outlined preliminary design ideas for each site and described the rationale used to select the final design approach. The aim of these efforts is to implement effective, site-specific restoration strategies.

ii. Pensacola Bay Oyster Restoration Initiative

W. Scheffel provided an update on the Pensacola Bay Oyster Restoration Initiative. She outlined the current project timeline and ongoing monitoring efforts. PPBEP is partnering with the University of West Florida, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, and the EPA to conduct oyster spat and larval monitoring every two-three weeks. This monitoring tracks spat settlement on concrete tiles and larval presence through vertical and horizontal plankton tows. The aim of this effort is to inform restoration strategies and support oyster population recovery in Pensacola Bay.

iii. Carpenter Creek Restoration

W. Scheffel provided an update on the Carpenter Creek Restoration project. PPBEP and Moffat & Nichol held their official internal kickoff meeting in June and are preparing to begin property owner engagements to facilitate creek access and community buy-in and developing a Community Engagement Plan.

iv. Microbial Source Tracking (MST)

W. Scheffel provided an update on the [MST Project](#). The MST study will be conducted in 9 sub-watersheds spanning the Pensacola and Perdido Bay watersheds. In partnership with Escambia County WQLM staff, PPBEP is currently compiling and synthesizing existing datasets as well as preparing for next steps in the project. These activities include preparing for future stakeholder engagements and developing a field sampling plan.

6. Around the Room/Announcements

- a. Joy Brown (NWFL Sentinel Landscape) shared an update about the [National Coastal Resilience Fund](#), suggesting that it will continue to receive funding, and she encouraged others to prepare proposals, if interested.

7. Adjourned